The Garden Corner  
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75% - That’s the percentage of food crops that depend at least in part on pollination. Besides the 20,000 species of wild bees, there are butterflies, moths, wasps, beetles, birds, bats, and other vertebrates that contribute to pollination. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; or IPBES, as it is affectionally called, has released the top reasons for the decline in pollinators. One of those reasons falls within our capable hands to assist: Loss of habitat. Stands to reason. There are more of us human critters on this rock and we’re taking up more space. So how can we help? Plant!!

A take-off from the movie Field of Dreams – “If you build it, they will come.” Well, if you plant it, they will come. A couple of years ago, we started the shift to a butterfly garden and the results have been amazing. If you can only plant one pollinator plant this year, make it milkweed – any type will do. The year we began, we might have seen one monarch. This past year, the majestic monarch was a common sight throughout the gardens. In fact, on the flowering head of the swamp milkweed, 15 monarchs were observed along with three giant fritillaries. 

All of us are getting the flower and seed catalogues this time of year. Like you, I’ve made a pile of them and have promised to get to them after Christmas. Well, it’s after Christmas. Here are some suggestions to help boost your pollinator populations. If you have some space, you might consider the Devil’s walking-stick. It’s a shrub with thorns (nothing new for Missouri!). The large clusters of white, fragrant flowers last for several weeks and draw all sorts of pollinators. Everyone has their favorite flowers for different reasons. Some of the proven winners in the Park have been: purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, phlox, lavender, salvia, thyme, sage, goldenrod, liatris, and bee balm. There is a huge list of flowers and vegetables that attract our winged friends (and the walkers too!) If you increase the types of plants they like, you will create more habitat; and, by that very effort, you will have contributed to the global initiative toward sustaining our pollinator populations. Yep! Little ole’ you! Right here in Warrensburg. You’ve had a global impact.   
For a bigger list of plants write: 370 NW 121 Rd., Warrensburg, MO 6403 or email: maandpak@embarqmail.com and I’ll get your list to you.

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